

sibility of closely inspecting them. There are also amongst these hills a great number of artificial caves.

I missed my cháddar at night, for its employment was to cover me when I slept, yet on the whole I was well pleased with my passage through Khaibar. My companion had instructed me on all occasions to appear pleased and cheerful, a salutary counsel, and one which stood me in good stead, as did the indication of perfect tranquillity, and most implicit confidence in the good faith of those I fell in with.

III. — *Narrative of Journey from Dákka to Kàbal.*

[Amongst the papers presented to the Bombay Geographical Society, was a very brief one headed "Notice on the province of Jelálabád and on the Síáposh." This was altogether unworthy of being published. I have therefore substituted for it the following "Narrative of a Journey from Dákka to Kábal" and "Memorandum on the Síáposh. This explanation is necessary, as the latter document is entirely a new composition



C. MASSON.]

Bombay, 5th June, 1841.

I have noted arrival at Dákka. This village situated about half a mile from the great river of Jelálabád, is also at the western entrance of the pass of Khaibar. The Ab-khâna route, to and from Pesháwer, alike commences and terminates at it. From its position, it is therefore a constant kâfila stage, and is the station of a guard of Momands, who levy transit fees on passengers and merchandize. There are two villages of the name, Kalân and Khúrd, or the great and little. The last is passed on the Ab-khâna route. We had halted at the former.

We left Dákka at day break, and for some time passed over a well cultivated plain until we made the small village of Ghirdí, seated immediately on the river. Hence the road led through low bare hills to Hazár Noh, (the thousand canals) a large straggling village placed on the brink of small eminences, which fringe the plain stretching from them to the river. Hazár Noh is considered equidistant from Dákka and Bassowal, and four cosses from each. The high road skirts the plain to the south, extending beneath the eminences on which the village stands, but we followed a path intermediate between it and the river, and intersecting the plain, which together with marshes, has a great proportion of meadow, and land

cultivated with rice. This plain, throughout its whole extent, is most copiously provided with water, gurgling from innumerable springs, at the line where the eminences to the left blend with it. At Bassowal we found an enclosed village, and two or three agricultural castles. We were hospitably entertained at the village, and the people brought a young female Albino that I might see her, jocosely remarking that she must be a Feringhí, and in the same mood recommending me to take her with me.

Opposite to Bassowal, which is close upon the river, very high steep hills confine the stream, and at their eastern extremity are a series of caves, with triangular entrances. The spot is called Chakanúr, and there are besides many other vestiges of antiquity there. Bassowal appears to occupy an ancient site, and has some venerable tamarisk trees, the remains of its antique groves. The same kind of memorials also distinguish the vicinage of Ghirdí. Between Bassowal and Már Koh (the snake hill), which occurs about three miles west of it, the soil is strewn with fragments of potters ware, and similar indications are seen all round the southern termination of the hill, even so far as Báttí Kot, a distance perhaps of five miles.

We left Bassowal in the evening, but instead of following the high road which passes by Báttí Kot, and thence by Súrkh Dewâl to Alí Bâghân and Jelálabád; we took a pleasanter and possibly a shorter one, tracing chiefly the river bank. Beyond Bassowal, we crossed a marsh full of reeds, and then by a short and open passage through the hill Már Koh, we arrived at Ambhár Khána, a small village on the river. Hence, we traversed the plain of Chahár Déh (the four villages), for four or five miles, and again approached hills, which like Már Koh, close upon the river. Opposite to Chahár Déh, across the stream, is the small and bare looking district of Goshter, into which the Karapa road from Pesháwer conducts. A few naked castles are sprinkled over the plain ascending to the hills, and there resides Fattúlah Khán Momand, a chief of less consequence than Sádat Khán of Lálpúra, and less respected. South of the plain of Chahár Déh is the village of Báttí Kot, famed for the zíárat of A'khúnd Músa, in virtue of whose holy benediction, the snakes numerous found on Már Koh, which derives its name from the circumstance, are believed to have been rendered harmless. I might have noticed that at Ghirdí is a celebrated zíárat of a saint, who was as much in his element when in the water as a fish, for it is credited that he would dive into the river at Ghirdí and re-appear at Atak.

The path from Chahár Déh winds around the hills, overlooking the fine stream. Practicable to footmen, it is difficultly so to horse-

men, who in some places are compelled to dismount. At one spot, there is a Súrâkh, or aperture, for some distance through the rock, whence the whole of the hills are often called Koh Sang Súrâkh (the hill of the perforated rock), and the same name is applied to the path. We came opposite to another of those monuments called Topes, seated on an eminence. It was very picturesque, and the scenery was so agreeable, that my Patán companion asked me if there were any spots so charming in my country. A little beyond or north of this Tope, a branch from the hills bounding Goshter terminates in a point, which from the white colour of the rock is called Saféd Bíní (the white nose, that is projection.) The hill itself yields steatite, to which its colour is due. About a mile hence we came to a village called Ghir-lí Kach, located pleasantly in a small amphitheatrical recess of the hills, which in the neighbourhood produce asbestos. We passed the night here in a masjíd. The people supplied us with food, but did not seem to be well pleased that I was not a Mússúlmân.

The next morning we continued our route, still leading along the river bank. On the opposite side was the district of Kámeh, which had commenced from Saféd Bíní. It is abundantly garnished with castles, villages and gardens, and has a good deal of cultivation. It is much more extensive than Goshter, and to the west is described by the river of Khonar and Chitrâl, called here the Kámeh, which divides it from Bísút. Clearing at length the hills named indifferently Koh Sang Súrâkh, or Koh Alí Bâghân, we reached the village of the latter name, seated on rising ground, and about a mile from the river. Here we halted during midday in a tamarisk grove, where some weavers of lúnghís were engaged in their business. At this village, called also Sammah Khél, is a shrine, to which lunatics are brought, it being believed that in virtue of the benediction of the saint interred here, they recover their reason.

In the evening we started, intending to reach Jelálabád some eight or nine miles distant. We choose a path, between the high road and the course of the river, which led through a low tract over-spread with marshes full of flags, and with pasture land. We had passed the point, where the Kámeh river falls into the river of Jelálabád, and had the district of Bísút on the opposite side of the river, when reaching a small village, Júi Shâhí, (the Royal canal), we were invited by a party sitting under the shade of some trees to rest awhile. The chief man proved to be Khalíl Khán, a Baiyát, and farmer of the customs of Jelálabád under the Nawâb Mahomed Zemán Khán. He told me that he lived in Bísút, and was so urgent

that I should spend two or three days with him that I consented. In the evening we were ferried across the stream in a boat, and I found the Khán's castle, a very neat and commodious one, seated amid the most luxuriant fields of sugar cane and lucerne, and with good gardens and fine groves of trees attached. In the immediate neighbourhood were many other handsome castles, and the country around seemed quite a garden. The heat was the only drawback, which although oppressive did not appear to produce sickness, nor did it absolutely prevent a person from moving about freely during the day. Khalíl Khán and his family were most kind and civil. In the day time they would sit with me under the shade of the mulberry trees, and in the evening, the youths of the contiguous hamlets would exhibit their rural sports and games, which were manly enough, but rough withal. I wished to make enquiries about the Síáposh Káfrs, and various people, Hindú and Mahomedan, were brought, who pretended to have some knowledge of them. I heard their wonderful and incongruous accounts, but benefited little by what I heard.

I had remained two or three days at Khalíl Khán's castle, when a messenger from Abdúl Ganní Khán, one of his neighbours, came and entreated that I would step over to his castle. I did so, and found that the Khán's object was to procure my advice for his young son, who had recently become deaf. I explained that I knew nothing of diseases, but was scarcely credited. They much wished to put something into the ears, and protesting that I did not dare to interfere with so tender an organ, I besought them to employ no violent remedies. The mother of Abdúl Ganní Khán, a most respectable Dúrání lady, gave me an interview. She was unveiled, and held an ivory mounted cane in her hand. She expressed much solicitude that her grandson should recover his hearing. I suggested that benefit might arise from warmth, and protecting the parts from air, but I suspect it was little conceived that remedies so simple could be of use. At this meeting I was regaled with a profusion of grapes and melons, and I was not allowed to return to Khalíl Khán's castle for a day or two, being detained as a guest. Abdúl Ganní Khán who was a Bárák Zai, and relative of the ruling Sirdárs in Afghánistán, had a handsome seignorial castle, with all necessary appurtenances, as became a man of his rank and condition.

My friend Khalíl Khán was a violent politician, and indulged frequently in severe diatribes against the Nawáb Mahomed Zemán Khán, whom he represented as an incapable ruler, and as little better than an old woman. Abdul Ganní Khán had also while I resided

with him an opportunity of displaying his political bias, and I was surprised to discover, that within three miles of Jelálabád, he was not only inimical to the Nawáb, whose relative he was, and whose subject I should have considered him to be, but that he was in the interest of the Pesháwer Sirdárs. I have in other places mentioned the coalition of the Sirdárs of Pesháwer and Kándahár with the object of humbling Dost Mahomed Khán, and that the Pesháwer army was to move upon Jelálabád. Sufficient reasons had prevented its march, but the idea was not abandoned. Now it seemed the Kándahár army had moved, or was about to move upon Ghazni and Kábal. Dost Mahomed Khán had summonsed Mahomed Zemán Khán to attend him. His absence leaving the Jelálabád province bare of troops, the Nawáb Jabár Khán, governor of the Ghiljis between Kábal and Jelálabád, was appointed to protect it from invasion on the side of Pesháwer, and tidings were at this time brought to Abdul Ganní Khán, that he had arrived with his troops at Jelálabád. The Khán immediately ordered the ferry boats to be secured, avowing that he would not allow Jabár Khán's soldiery to cross the river, and pillage his raiyats. Some persons asked the Khán, whether he was not acting precipitately, and he replied that the Pesháwer army would arrive in a day or two, strong in cavalry and guns, and that there was nothing to fear. He then went into the country to concert measures, and I found that he had two other brothers in Bísút, holding their jaghírs under the Nawáb, but no more friendly to him than was Abdul Ganní Khán.

While the latter was absent, I returned to Khalíl Khán, but could not cross the river, as a guard was stationed over the ferry boats. I was not then aware that by passing higher up on the same side of the stream, there were other ferries beyond the Bísút district. After a farther stay with Khalíl Khán, he having himself business which required him to cross the river, it was arranged to make a jála or float of inflated skins, and on it we passed. I took farewell of the friendly Khán, who strove to induce me to accept clothes, money and horses, but I forbore to trespass on his bounty. I was sorry to have learned during my abode with him, that his affairs were embarrassed ; and that his anger with Mahomed Zemán Khán was principally owing to the latter being apt to require, as Khalíl Khán thought unreasonably, an adjustment of his long unsettled accounts.

We soon reached Jelálabád, which we entered by the eastern gate, after having passed the decayed yet very obvious ramparts of two former towns, whose site is now occupied by the present town, the smallest of the three. Enclosed within mud walls, it has but an indiffer-

ent appearance, yet its bazár now exhibited much activity, being filled with the soldiery of the Nawáb Jabár Khán.

I was no sooner recognized to be a Feringhí, then many hastened to inform the Nawáb of my arrival, that popular chief being notorious for his good feelings towards Europeans. In a short time his people were with me, requesting me to wait upon him. I was not then particularly acquainted with his history, but had heard it frequently remarked at Pesháwer, that there, Sáltán Mahomed Khán was the Feringhí's friend, and at Kábal, the Nawáb Jabár Khán. I was not in the best trim to appear before the good Nawáb, or before any other person, yet I had discovered that Afgháns are not particular as to trifles, and that I was just as well received in rags, as I should have been, had I been more sumptuously arrayed.

I therefore accompanied his emissaries to a garden house without the town, where the chief had established his quarters. He was in the upper apartments, which were choked up with his subordinate officers, attendants, and soldiery. He saluted me civilly, and said that I must stay with him, to which I replied, no, and that I intended to go on. He then observed that I must stay two or three days with him, and I again replied, no, on which he said that I must at least spend the day with him, to which I answered I had no objection. The people about wondered how I had got through Khaibar, and the Nawáb remarked for me, that I had nothing to lose. He informed me that he would provide a man to conduct me in safety to Kábal, to which I did not object, and thanked him. He then inquired if I needed any thing, and I replied negatively. The Nawáb directed that I should be taken all care of, and I took my leave of him. I was now conducted to a house, which I was told to consider mine as long as I pleased to occupy it, and to give myself no anxiety about any thing, as all my wants would be attended to by the Nawáb's orders.

I was soon visited by two singular characters, the one a Molaví from Lahore, the other a Bráhmaṇ from Laknow. They stated that they had each set out on a tour for some years, and accidentally meeting, had become companions. Chance had brought them into contact with the Nawáb, and they were now sojourners with him. They much praised his good qualities. In manners and conversation, they were extremely refined and intelligent, and had mirth and spirituality, which I had never before witnessed in a Mahomedan or Hindú. They seemed independent in circumstances, and their apparel, equipage, &c. all bore the marks of affluence. Both made me offers of clothing, money, &c. and apparently with sincerity. I had indeed some difficulty to decline a horse, which was urged upon me by the Mola-

ví, who could not imagine a person could travel, without pain, on foot. I accepted their invitation to pass the day with them, and leaving the house, accompanied them to their quarters. I knew not their names, but heard the Bráhmaṇ merrily addressed as Múlla Mall. I afterwards learned that they were versed, or reputed to be, in the occult secrets of Kímía or gold making, which at once accounted for their companionship, and for the high favour they were held in by the Nawáb, who is one of the most ardent votaries of the mysterious science to be met with in Afghánistán.

Early the next morning we started from Jelálabád, the Nawáb having given a very good man to accompany us to Kábal. He had also provided a horse for me to ride on, and occasionally or when inclined, I made use of the animal. Leaving the choice of road to our new attendant, we were led the high one, skirting the border of the cultivated plain on our right, and generally winding around the base of a series of conglomerate elevations to the left, which extend for fifteen or twenty miles to the great mountain range Safèd Koh (the white hill), which noble barrier defines the limits of the Jelálabád valley to the south, and divides it from Bangash. The plain of Jelálabád is cultivated to a high degree, and in this part of it, with an average breadth of three or four miles, has a length from Jelálabád to Bálla Bágh of twelve or thirteen miles. Its entire length being estimated from the hill of Koh Sang Súrakh, and carried beyond Bálla Bágh, would be double this distance, but the portion east of the town is by no means so abundantly cultivated, or so populous as that to the west. This tract is covered with a profusion of castles, villages and gardens, while to the north it is defined by the course of the Kábal river, flowing beneath sandstone elevations, stretching to the skirts of the high ranges occupying the space between Khonar and Lúghmán. Behind, or north of these ranges, is the region of the Síáposh Káfrs. Besides the Kábal river, the plain is copiously irrigated by other streams, and notably by the Súrkh Rúd, (the red river) which enters it from the west, and falls into the main river at Darúnta : — by the Kára-sú (the black river) which east of Bálla Bágh, unites with the Súrkh Rúd : — and by the numerous and beautiful springs of Súltánpúr, which form a rivulet flowing through the centre of the plain by Chahár Bágh. Few countries can possess more attractive scenery, or can exhibit so many grand features in its surrounding landscape. In every direction the eye wanders on huge mountain ranges.

We passed successively to our right the larger villages of the plain, Chahár Bágh distinguished for its royal garden, and for being the abode of a venerated Hiudú Gúrú, — Súltánpúr famous for its

orchards and springs, and the reputed shrine of Bábá Nának : Shamshípúr : and Wattípúr, — until we reached the small enclosed town of Bálla Bágh, seated on the southern bank of the Súrkh Rúd, and the representative of the ancient Adínápúr, whose slender vestiges are on the opposite bank. This place is more commercial than Jelálabád, has many Hindú traders and a few bankers resident at it. The site being more elevated, the climate is less sultry. To the west, there is a large royal garden, and the environs to the east are highly cultivated, particularly with sugar cane. To the south and west, a bleak stony plain extends. We found here six pieces of artillery, belonging to the Nawáb Mahomed Zemán Khán, lying without the town gate to the south, and halted during the day at a Takía or Mahomedan shrine.

In the evening, complying with the wishes of our guide, we left the high road leading to Nimla and Gandamak, and descended into the valley of the Súrkh Rúd, which flows at the base of a mountain range, the Síá Koh, (black hill) separating the Jelálabád country from Lúghmán. This range stretches from Darúnta to Jigdillak, with a length of about twenty-five miles. We proceeded up the valley, passing a few Afghán hamlets and fortlets, and occasionally crossing the minor rivulets, which flow into the Súrkh Rúd, having their rise in the Saféd Koh range. The valley was every where cultivated, so far as the scantiness of the soil permitted, but the surface was rocky and unfavourable to the farmer. The houses were alike mean in appearance and structure, and it was evident that their tenants, rude Ghiljís, were not very affluent. On the hills behind Bálla Bágh, under which are the ruins attributed to Adínápúr, we had noticed a great variety of ruined parapets and walls, also a few caves with triangular entrances. At a spot in this valley called Kang Karak, where a large riýulet joins the river, and where a road over the plain of Bának strikes off to Nimla, there were a more considerable number of caves, and the locality was agreeably picturesque. At length we halted at a hamlet, and passed the night on the roof of one of the houses. We had little to be taken from us, but a robber this night intended to have taken that little. He had crept, in pursuance of his plan, upon the roof, but chancing to awaken my companions, he was compelled to flight.

The next day, still tracing the course of the river, now gliding through hills on either side, we came upon the high road, at a locality called Súrkh Púl (the red bridge) from a dilapidated structure of one arch thrown over the stream, according to a Persian inscription on a rock near it, by Alí Merdán Khán. The river is fordable,

I suspect at all seasons, unless when encreased by sudden swells. The road led hence to Jigdillak, but implicitly obedient to our guide, we again struck across the country to the south, and leaving the Ghiljí district of Hissarak on our left, turned westernly and ultimately reached Hávízángání, a spot where we found a dwelling with a few vines near it, a flour mill, a tandúr or baker's oven, an assemblage of Afghán tents, two lines of fine standard mulberry trees laden with ripe purple fruit, and a spring of delicious water. Beneath the shade of the mulberry trees were sitting some eight or ten persons. We discovered that they were in some degree strangers as well as ourselves. The greater number of them were the party of a Malek of Fattíabád, a village three or four miles south of Bálla Bágh, whom business had brought here; — and the others a Sàhib-záda of Loghar with his attendants. In the last we had a companion for our onward journey, and we soon became familiar with the whole of the party and sat with them. The mulberry trees were shaken, and an enormous heap of the fruit placed before me. I had eaten the mulberries of Kohát, Hángú and Pesháwer, but had never before seen or tasted fruit comparable to the present. I needed not encouragement to enjoy the treat. In course of the day, the Malek observed to me that he had ten wives, and wished me, from my Feringhí knowledge, to communicate some specific to strengthen him. I asserted my inability to oblige him, and he wished me to look into my book. I said that the book was on very different matter, and did not look into it. He was exceedingly persisting that I should consult the book, and I unwisely did not humour him, it not occurring to me that he might be merely curious to see what was in it, or whether there was any Persian writing which he might understand.

Since leaving Bálla Bágh, although the weather was still warm, we had by no means experienced the heats prevailing in the plain of Jelálabád, and in the country to the east. We were quite conscious by our feelings that we were travelling into a purer and cooler atmosphere. At this place however the change was extremely sensible, and I was in high spirits at the certainty of having reached the cold country. Neither was I less delighted at the novelties shewn in the aspect of the country, and in its vegetable productions. Here I first met with the common but fragrant plant terk, and cannot express my joy when I inhaled the breeze perfumed with its odour. I was never tired of roving about the low hills in our neighbourhood, and found every thing new and pleasing — but I was unusually glad, — and a strange presentiment arose in my mind,

which I could not banish, that some present evil would befall me. In the evening, I was the guest of some one, I knew not of whom, but a stewed fowl was brought to me from the Afghán tents, where the females prepared the repast for the whole party. — I ate a portion of it, and was told to tie up the remainder for the morning. I did so, and placed it near my book, and as night came on, went to sleep. In the morning my book was missing. I was chagrined to lose so simply what the Khaibar robbers had respected, and returned to me. Ineffectual search was made over the neighbourhood, and I was compelled to leave without recovering it. My companions suspected the Malek of Fattíabád might have taken it, but there was the probability that some dog, or other animal, had carried it off with the fowl, which had also disappeared. My regret made me use high language, but I was cautioned to be moderate, as the inhabitants, Ghiljís, were bad people.

We left Hávízângâní, to me a disastrous spot, and our small party was augmented by that of the Loghar Sáhíbzáda, a respectable and agreeable person. We made this day the passage of the Kotal or pass of Karkacha, the most southernly of the routes leading from Jelálabád to Kábal; the other is that of Jigdiliak, and both lead to Tézi. I cannot call to mind that the Kotal was any where difficult, but I dismounted during the greater portion of it, rather from consideration for my horse, than from necessity. The hills are not abrupt, and many of them have a surface of dark red soil. They cover the space between the Jelálabád valley and Amán Koh the western continuation of Saféd Koh, where the Súrkh Rúd rises, and from the river washing away their particles in its course, it acquires in certain seasons a deep red tinge, whence its name. The pass afforded some delightful scenery, and the hills, overspread with pine fir, and holly trees, were peculiarly interesting. We descended into the valley of Tézi, where we halted at a collection of pastoral Afghán tents, the people receiving us as guests, being happy, it appeared to entertain a Sáhíbzáda's party. Tézi was a picturesque valley, with a castle, and much cultivation on a rivulet, near which we halted. At its southern extremity, in the high hills confining it, were visible the castles and gardens of various Ghiljí chiefs, who own the valley. The rivulet of Tézi flows with a marked descent by Séh Báhá, and falls into the Kábal river near Súrbi. We found at Tézi in the garden attached to the castle, the troops of Sadú Khán, the chief whose expulsion from Hángú, I have noted. They were under the orders of a Náib, and en route to reinforce the Nawáb Jabár Khán at Jelálabád. I chanced to stroll near them, and

narrowly escaped having a scuffle with some of them, who wished to treat me as a Ghiljí rogue, others recognized me, and in lieu of maltreatment, I was overwhelmed with goodness. I sat some time with the leader, and was regaled with apricots, sent for from the Tézí Malek's private garden. Readiness was professed to recover my book, and the Náib said he would do his best, when in a day or two, he should be at Hávízángání. We remained the night at Tézí.

The next morning we crossed the succession of passes, called the Haft kotal, (seven passes) the road tolerably good, and reached the table lands extending to Khúrd Kábal (little Kábal) — at their commencement was the grave of Jabár, the progenitor of the great Ghiljí family of that name, and beyond it the remains of a Chaghatai fortress. The plain to the south has for boundary a well marked hill range, under which we see the castle and gardens of Tchakrí, where resides Walí, a Karoh Khèl Ghiljí, and notorious freebooter. As we approached Khúrd Kábal, we passed the remains of another Chaghatai fortress, constructed of a white argillaceous stone containing fossil fresh water shells, which abound in the formation of the plains hereabouts. Beyond the fortress a short tanghí or defile, through which flows a rivulet, conducted into the plain of Khúrd Kábal, of fair extent, comprising some cultivated lands, a good deal of pasture, and a fine rivulet, which coming from Mùsáhí passes through defiles to Bhút Khák, and thence into the river of Kábal. The village of Khúrd Kábal was seated on the opposite side of the stream, at some distance, under the hills, neither did we visit it, although it is a common halting place. We had heard that the cholera which had been so destructive at Pesháwer, had travelled on to Kábal, and was raging with great violence. The Sáhibzáda was afraid to venture to the city, and as the direct way to Loghar, leads from Khúrd Kábal, we now separated. He would have been pleased that I should have accompanied him, and have remained in Loghar, until the pestilence had ceased; but I declined his polite proposal, as I did not purpose to linger at Kábal, and hoped to pass unharmed the one or two days I might stay in its vicinity. We crossed the hills separating the plain of Khúrd Kábal, from that of the great city, by a byepath, and descended upon Killa Mohsan, where we halted, and had bread prepared. Towards evening we started anew, and crossing the meadows of Bégrám, and the river of Loghar, we reached by sunset the castle of Agá Lála at Bini Sár, (the nose of the city) about three miles south of the Bálla Hissár of Kábal. This castle belonged to a family, many of whose members resided at Pesháwer, and I had been directed to repair to it, and to make it my home.

I found that the mother of Agá Lála was dwelling at it. She sent a message of welcome to me, and informed me that she was going into the city that night, where some one dear to her was indisposed, but would return in the morning, and every attention should be paid to me. The good lady went, and I was told in the morning, she was no more. The cholera had added her to the number of its victims.

The city, I learned, was in charge of Mahomed Akbár Khán, second son of Dost Mahomed Khán, who, with his army, was encamped at Ghazní, awaiting the arrival of his hostile brothers from Kándahár. I determined to lose no time in proceeding to the Sirdár's camp, being as curious to witness the proceedings of an Afghán army, as desirous to escape from the baleful influence of contagion and disease.

IV. — *Memorandum on the Siàposh*



The Honorable Mr. Elphinstone in the appendix to his admirable work on Afghánistán, has included an account, as given by one of his agents, Múlla Najíb, of the singular and secluded people known to their Mahomedan neighbours as the Síáposh Káfrs, or black clad infidels, and who inhabit the mountainous regions north of Lúghmân and Khonar, and between the courses of the Nadjíl and Kámeh rivers.

It is pretty certain that Múlla Najíb, who is still alive, never ventured into the Síáposh country, as I believe he pretended, still his account is the only tolerable one which has appeared of the customs and usages of the mysterious race. At the period of the Kábal mission in 1809, it was easy for him to learn all that he has recorded, by actual communication with the numerous individuals of their nation, who were wont to visit the towns and villages of Peshatt and Khonar, under protection of Saiyad Najím, then the ruler of those districts, who preserved an understanding with his Síáposh neighbours.

No subsequent accounts have contributed much additional information, being merely hearsay statements given and received at random :—and a little reflection will teach that trustworthy information is scarcely to be expected from casual sources. The Mahomedans, bordering on the Síáposh frontiers, are incompetent to speak accurately of the manners, habits, history or traditions, of tribes, with whom they have no friendly intercourse.

They repeat therefore the wondrous tales they have heard from persons as ignorant as themselves, whence their variance with all probability, and with each other. It also happens that the few Síá-